DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 834 SP 029 484

AUTHOR Hurwitz, Al
TITLE An International Dimension in Art Teacher Education.
SPONS AGENCY American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 20p.; Paper commissioned by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education for the Guidelines for International Teacher Education Project. For related documents, see ED 265 103-115.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Art Education; *Art Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Global Approach; Higher Education; Interdisciplinary Approach; *International Education; *Preservice Teacher Education; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

A case is make for the incorporation of an international dimension into the preparation of art teachers. Ways are suggested for integrating global education into a program of teacher education. Research and literature pertaining to the definition of art, the acceleration of interest in global education among art teachers, shared beliefs, student behavior, and the making of an art teacher are reviewed, and implications for the development of global education within the field are suggested. Art exchange programs, international art study, review of aspects of artistic growth, and encouragement of students to join international art organizations are suggested as ways to incorporate international art into the regular art curriculum. (CB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ED287834

AN INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION IN ART TEACHER EDUCATION

AL HURWITZ

Chair, Department of Art Education
Maryland Institute, College of Art

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to state a case for incorporating an international dimension to the preparation of art teachers, and to suggest specific ways of integrating global education into a program of teacher education. It is hoped that as the assumptions behind the goals of art educators are examined, readers will gain a deeper awareness of the implications of long-held assumptions and beliefs. Some readers will see this paper as addressing the curricula of the future; while to others, the press of existing events cries for immediate curricular change.

Among the many statements and position papers which have appeared (1) certain goals and needs have emerged which have particular relevance to arts teachers:

...The belief in the value of the diversity of the cultures that make up our planet.

...The need for cross-cultural empathy.

...The ability of educators to by-pass political strictures and to establish modes of communication.

SP 029 484

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

ICET

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

...The desire of educators to share what we know and possess, and the curiosity to learn from others.

...A sense of collegiality with those who share our love of art, of teaching and of children.

These are broad beliefs shared by teachers in general. Those which are more specifically art centered will be dealt with later in this paper.

DEFINING ART

The way most countries define art, its processes and purposes are reflected in the tasks which society requires of its children. For years, America was particularly responsive to influences beyond the art world and only in the last two decades have we moved closer to the realms of the critic and the historian. Most recently the philosophy which underlies discipline based art education (DBAE) has added the role of the aesthetician.(2) The Soviets have traditionally concentrated upon the artist as model as the basis for curriculum and in the past decade has striven to negotiate a shift towards folk or indigenous art forms as a basis for art instruction. In Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Germany, a growing number of art teachers so socially oriented in their thinking they abjure the very term "art" preferring to refer to themselves as "visual communicators." In each case cited, there lies an aesthetic stance regarding the role that art plays not only in the life of the child, but in society at large.

Whatever its national or local context, art education continues to exist in the curricula of every society. However art is defined, certain issues continue to concern thoughtful and dedicated art educators. Art teachers in Ghana, Austria or Eastern Europe must all confront similar questions: Why is art worth the time and expense that it requires? How is it to be taught? Indeed, how shall it be defined in view of the increasing philosophical pluralism of many countries such as Holland, Germany and the United States? When questions arise regarding the contexts of art instruction, art educators focus their attention upon the ways colleges prepare teachers to deal with the development of goals, the methodology of instruction and the planning of curriculum.

American teachers have begun to realize that the time has come for them to break out of their cultural and professional isolation and learn how others are realizing their goals. Some teachers are curious about practical solutions to their problems while others simply reflect a professional curiosity about their field. When teachers become curious about how their foreign colleagues operate, they become open to perspectives other than their own, and in so doing, they begin to dispel that cultural arrogance of which Americans are so often accused.

Although Americans like to think of themselves as a flexible people--as eager to share as to borrow--we rarely take the trouble to study the options which exist beyond our own geographical boundaries.

ACCELERATION OF INTEREST AMONG U. S. ART TEACHERS

In the 60s, U.S. educators were eager to study the effects of the British open education, integrated day movement and for a brief period many of us went to England to learn what the British were doing that could be of use in our own school systems. The number of art specialists who participated was embarrassingly small. It is only in the past decade that there has been an acceleration of interest in foreign practice. We now exchange publications, invite educators from abroad to speak at our conferences and even hold training sessions in the methodology of research--U.S. style. Art teachers who cannot afford to travel abroad can now count on at least two international conferences a year in this country through their own organizations--the National Art Education Association and USSEA, the U.S. Society for Education through Art, our own branch of the UNESCO non-governmental organization, INSEA (The International Society for Education through Art).

This expanding area of professional concern is also reflected by an increase in the current literature on cross-cultural issues in both commercial and official U.S. publications such as USSEA's Journal of Cross-Cultural Research. One could also point to the growing number of students from abroad who seek graduate studies in art education in the United States, particularly from Great Britain, Africa and Islamic countries. A few U.S. universities such as Penn State, Ohio State and Illinois State, actively encourage foreign students to

participate in their programs and have become unofficial centers for students seeking cross-cultural studies in this country.

As we get to know each other, it becomes clear that the beliefs which bind us outweigh the factors which separate our thinking. During my tenure as president of INSEA, I have searched for a core of beliefs regarding art education shared by all art teachers regardless of the country in which they reside. Based upon countless conversations with teachers and examinations of curriculum materials, one can safely say that there are some clear points of consensus which exist despite national differences.

SHARED BELIEFS: ART CENTERED

...Art teachers seem to believe that we are by nature shapers, formers and decorators. Since the process of creating form is a natural and desirable function of humans, art is an appropriate area of study in the schools.

...It is possible to derive pleasure from each other's artwork even when we do not completely understand it. Because art education can improve our understanding of each other's value systems and cultural identities, it should be included as part of general education for all children and adolescents.

...Since all of us are thinking, feeling, expressive beings, art education can direct us easily to a more complete realization of our humanity.

...Ideas of what is pleasing or beautiful differ from culture to culture. Experiencing art many believe may involve

moral and ethical as well as aesthetic considerations. (For example, the European Marxist sees purposive beauty in a mini-park arising out of a slum area and regards this as more "moral" than a painting made for personal pleasure.)

...Although he claim that the study of art enables us to be more compassionate and more sensitive to each other's problems, this assumption has yet to be proved in empirical terms. The conviction, however, that art is a humanizing process is a belief to which most art teachers subscribe. This is part of a universally-shared mystique which surround art education and has to do with a sense of mission.

The ways in which art education differs in matters of practice and belief are as revealing as are areas of concurrence. The following examples will serve to dramatize some of the divergence which exists.

CENTRAL VS. LOCAL AUTHORITY

While America has a national direction, it is still one of the few countries which avoids central authority. The NAEA is a professional organization in that it makes recommendations, and is a voice for National Policy based upon the consensus of its members. Beyond that, authority may range from state to local levels to the individual teacher. The USSR and the Asian countries (Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, in particular) are very clear about what they believe all children should experience in art. Although Israel is a country which makes an attempt at central direction, its lack of success is due to the diversity of

both the teaching and the student population. At the opposite end of the spectrum of control is Qatar, a country so centrally controlled that the national director of art keeps a record of each art work completed by every student in the country.

STYLES OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR

The behavior of children in the art room is often linked to the mores of the community. In Asian societies--notably China, Korea and Japan, family styles are still Confucian in their regard for harmony among their members. This, in turn, is transferred to the schools and is reflected in the relationship between pupils and teachers. Art classes in the Soviet Union although as quiet and orderly as those in the Orient, are manageable for other reasons--the constrictive nature of authority, the high public regard for teachers and a view of schooling as a center for the development of personal discipline. Art rooms in Lapland, the U.S., Sweden and Israel are likely to be much more informal, noisy, and in general, messier places. The tolerance which the teachers in these schools have for discussion, self-direction, and freedom of choice in art appears to be consistent with the value placed upon originality and creative development. (The notable ability of Korean children to deal with ideas with fluency and imagination is an interesting exception to this.) Informal student/teacher relationships can also be observed in the art rooms of Hungary and Armenia where the long arm of political authority does not penetrate.

In most countries the mystique which surrounds the artist as

someone free of the constraints which surround other professions has served to keep the art rooms of the world the most relaxed and personally fulfilling areas of the school.

When traveling abroad, teachers enjoy a kind of power which allows them to venture into territory that may be denied to others. There is no society where those who spend their lives with children are not welcome. Of course, it is possible to politicize anything and there is a growing minority of art educators who insist upon the imposition of non-artistic issues at discussions at international conferences. When that happens, it can be difficult to regain that cherished sense of gemutlichkeit which is always present in the early stages of an international meeting.

Tomorrow's art teachers will have to function on two levels when studying, meeting, taveling abroad--it is no longer enough to settle for an easy-going, informal sense of professional comraderie. The American educational explorers of the future are going to have to be more informed about their own country. They should have mastered at least one foreign language and possess a clearer knowledge of how others perceive their country. They will have to give more thought to the reasons for foreign perceptions which may be as jarring as they are uncomplimentary.

How does one fit such information into a program of teacher education and how can a teacher raise the consciousness of students without cutting into precious instructional time which seems to be threatened due to new demands? In order to arrive at

some answers we should first review the education of art teachers as it now exists.

THE MAKING OF AN ART TEACHER

The training of an arts teacher is based upon the study of five or six general areas depending upon how a university classifies knowledge and skills. We can begin with a liberal arts component, that group of courses offered on the assumption that it is the study of the humanities and sciences which defines the difference between vocational training and liberal or "freeing" forms of education. To say that the study of literature or biology bears little relation to the tasks that art teachers must ultimately face does not invalidate the belief that non-utilitarian knowledge has uses beyond the functional level of practice. A sophomore may, and probably will, forget the answers to a final examination in history and yet will retain enough general knowledge of the structure of that discipline to read a newspaper or make some useful connections with his major area of study.

The second realm of concentration concerns those practical and theoretical affairs of teaching which are generic in nature and are common to all teachers whatever their field. This area can be divided into two parts. The first is the more vocational in nature since it includes ordering supplies, creating and maintaining certain kinds of classroom environments and the preparation and use of teaching resources. A second part includes micro-teaching, dealing with problems of discipline,

mainstreaming special populations and so on. In some programs, these two practical domains--which are where we learn to make things work--are handled through the general methods courses. In some institutions, a distinction has been made to separate the operational from the theoretical, leading us to a third domain--theory. This deals largely with philosophy of art education, pedagogy and curriculum planning as well as those imponderables shared by all art teachers in all societies and which can be reduced to questions difficult to avoid, such as: what is the nature of art, or of music? what would children be missing if art did not exist in the curriculum? how doe we go about deciding what shall be taught? Having determined the options and made the choices, how do we then move children from point A to point B?

The fourth area--of special importance in art schools or conservatories, is that aspect of training which deals specifically with the content or discipline of art. This is where we attend to the artist in the student. Although the major emphasis here is upon studio facility, e.g., drawing, painting, design, printmaking or sculpture, the State Department of Education, which has their own say in teacher training, may require such non fine arts subjects as photography, metals, clay and fibers. Although content-specific courses also include art history, they rarely, if ever, include criticism or aesthetics. The content area is where students feel most at home; it is what brought them to us in the first place. It takes us deeper into

their personal histories and it has to do with that level of profound satisfaction whose roots are buried in childhood. Content-specific learning must be adequately attended to since it is the love of art which often given arts teachers an edge over their colleagues. The most important task facing the teacher of teachers is to instill a respect for teaching that matches their love for and personal involvement in art.

The last area of preparation is the internship--usually a full semester working with students under the supervision of a directing teacher who can serve hopefully as both model and mentor. While the university provides supervision at this point, the major responsibility lies with the supervising teacher whose job it is to see that the student can create some workable synthesis from all previous encounters with theory, arts content, curriculum planning, evaluation and so on. This is critical in both time and energy, and it is up to the university or college to see that the student has been adequately prepared so that the passage between theory and practice can be made with as little stress as possible.

ADDING THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

Having reviewed the general pattern of art teacher education, how and at what point do we include an awareness of international issues? We can assume at the outset that new courses are out of the question. Most states have already added requirements in special education and the teaching of reading for all teachers. it is hardly likely that we can enlist sympathies

on either the state or local level for further extension of credit requirements. The answer lies in patterns of infusion, in integrating new information at appropriate junctures in the curriculum. Below are listed some ways in which the future art teacher can be drawn into the recognition of global contexts for his field.

...Every program of art education should have as part of its resources original works by children which can be obtained through exchange programs or borrowed from such collections as the one housed by the Everson Museum at Illinois State University. We need to study the works of children not only to make comparative assessments of the curriculum and philosophy of various cultures but also to dispel the kind of stereotypical thinking that results from media distortions, films, video and so on. Art while possessing its discursive aspects is primarily a visual experience, thus making it a particularly appropriate area of study for students who wish to analyze, compare and draw inferences from what is seen.

...A number of surprises lie in store for the student who studies international art education. To cite a few examples--what is one to make of the superb art programs for both white and "colored" groups in the apartheid-ridden programs of South Africa, or the imaginative story illustrations and fantasy sculpture that one finds in Soviet Russia? How does one account for the high incidence of imagination in such apparently docile school societies as one finds in Korea, where classes are often

twice the size of our own and where discipline problems rarely exists? While some cultures are burdened by cliches of perception, others do not even rate a stereotypical response. The art programs of Qatar or Malaysia are as distinctive as the ones mentioned above--yet what ideas do we have regarding the nature of their art programs?

...Students of art education review the developmental aspects of artistic growth at some point in their training. Traditionally the work of Viktor Lowenfeld (3) or some variant of his formulation of the study of growth provides the basis for such study. We can begin here to alert students not only to those aspects of child art which are universal, but to those which are culturally determined. Much of childrens' visual experience is conditioned by their peers, their visual surroundings, broad graphic influences and so on. This inevitably has an effect on how children handle space, patterning, the human figure and the choice of subject matter. When we attend to such differences, we attempt to account for them and when this happens, we begin to probe more deeply into the contexts of student work. The artwork of schools in countries other than our own should be incorporated into the basic content of any study of the nature of school art, the study of curriculum or the effects of environment on the growth process.

...The theoretical phase of study often includes an examination--usually hasty and superficial--of the history of ideas and personalities which have shaped U.S. art education.

This may include such figures as Walter Smith and the founding of the Massachusetts School of Art; John Dewey and Viktor Lowenfeld; the picture study movement; the Owattana Project, and so on. The European perspective is even sketchier and is usually limited to Herbert Read in England, Franz Cizek in Austria and very little else. The time has come to recognize those European figures who have shaped the course of developmental psychology in art and to regard Lowenfeld as part of a continuum whose roots lie in Germany, France, Italy and England. Although international contexts for ideas currently in use in America is normally included on the graduate level, there is no reason why it cannot be dealt with on the undergraduate level.

...Teachers should encourage students to join the one professional organization that is devoted to art education--INSEA, The International Society for Education through Art.(4) A UNESCO affiliate, INSEA through its newsletters informs its members of international, regional and national conferences. Student membership dues are low ($10 per year) and if one cannot afford to travel to a conference, INSEA offices will be happy to put people in touch on a job-alike basis. Students and teachers of the writer's acquaintence who have begun by corresponding, have eventually met at conferences, hosted each other and exchanged student work. Programs of art education exist in colleges of higher education in most countries and students are invariably curious about each other's training. They also use their contacts to collect curriculum guides and

gather material for projects, term papers and research projects. Obviously very little of the above can happen if teachers do not serve as a model through their own involvement with the international scene.

...If Americans are often surprised at how much others know about them, it is because we unconsciously use our own state of ignorance as criteria for measuring such knowledge. The Russians, as an example, know more about us than we do about them. What should be of even greater interest to us is the fact that they are more curious about us.

...This is reflected in public school classrooms whose walls are adorned by portraits of American writers such as Mark Twain, Jack London and Ernest Hemingway (complete with quotations in English).

...Russia's interest in America is consistent with those members of Soviet art education bureaucracy who receive and read all major U.S. books and journals on art education.

...Nor is the U.S.S.R. an isolated example of the one-way street that characterizes U.S. world relationships in education. U.S. graduate programs, as previously noted, are significant parts of the chain that links our country to the rest of the world. Art educators from as far afield as Jordan and Africa come to America to receive their doctorates and return to their own countries to begin the demanding process of working out some synthesis between Western-based ideas and the demands of their societies. Unfortunately, this is not a reciprocal situation.

American teachers do not attend foreign centers of learning because, for the most part, graduate programs in art education simply do not exist. Indeed, the reason a student from Africa comes to a U.S. university is so that graduate programs in art education can ultimately begin to exist in his country. This imbalance only serves to deepen the insularity of most American teachers. What our arts teachers need, and would support, are intensive, short-term institutes held at foreign centers of education. Such immersions, however brief, would familiarize participants with personalities, problems and current thinking to which host countries are addressing themselves and would also fill a void caused by lack of graduate opportunities abroad, particularly in third world countries. Such institutes could serve both art teachers and students and dispel the notion that the west is the fount from which all wisdom flows.

...Another area that provides a natural linkage for cross-cultural study is the study of the philosophy of art education, since it is on this level that students are most likely to confront points of view which may be in direct conflict with beliefs espoused by one's profession. The stated goals of two countries may be couched in the same language, but in practice, appear to be quite different. While this can prove to be an unsettling experience, there is always the possibility that foreign view points can reveal some unexpectedly effective ways of approaching one's own problems.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM OUR COLLEAGUES ABROAD?

The Japanese can teach us to pay closer attention to our national traditions; the Soviets can show us how community agencies such as artist's studios, youth "palaces" and museums can better serve the gifted. The Americans, the Israelis and the French have a growing number of models that also demonstrate new uses of museums and the Brazilians have demonstrated that art education is possible in areas so isolated that the radio is the sole means of instructional communication. The Marxist-oriented "visual communicators" in Holland or Germany can show us how to better deal with the socio-political dimension of art education and the Armenians and Egyptians remind us of the high level of attainment in crafts that is possible for children in primary grades. America's thrust towards the improvement of teaching critical-appreciative skills is shared by the English who approach it differently than do our own teachers. We would also do well to study Britain's "working parties" and their system of "seconding" University teachers to work in the schools to deal with particular problems.

Hungary for the past decade has been experimenting with a number of approaches for interdisciplinary teaching with the arts at the center of the process, and has done a superb job in the arts education of minorities--notably the gypsies. America and Israel still nurture the dream of an art specialist in every elementary school, and Israel is the country to study if one wants to see how a multi-cultural country fares when commitment to art education is constantly threatened by a climate of war,

terrorism and inflation.

No one country has all the answers, nor can any one society be singled out as maintaining a full or adequate array of support for the aesthetic needs of all its children. When we take the time to study the models that lie beyond our geographic boundaries, two things occur: We reaffirm the belief in our professional mission and we enhance the possibilities which lie within our own boundaries. It has been stated that those who know their mother tongue have yet to master even one language. The belief that a second perspective allows us to view our own problems with greater clarity is particularly apropos to the shifting field of the arts educator. It can also reaffirm Tolstoy's belief that, "Art is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feeling."(5)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Ott, Robert and Hurwitz, Al. "ART AND EDUCATION: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE," Penn State press, 1984.

2. "BEYOND CREATING," Statement by the J. Paul Getty Center for Education in the Arts.

3. Lowenfeld, Viktor. "CREATIVE AND MENTAL GROWTH." N.Y.: MacMillan Publishers, 1947.

5. Tolstoy, Leo. "WHAT IS ART?" Henry Altemus, Philadelphia, PA, p. 297.

4. INSEA, write: John Steers
International Secretary of INSEA
7A High Street
Corsham, Wiltshire
SN1-3OES
U.K.